FUN, PUNS & SERIOUS THINGS

Collected Verses

by

MAE H. AREY

Poem on page 19 to Grandma Hallman written by a friend that Compiled her poems from over the years. Lived to be over 100 years.

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Illustrations by Susan Finsterle

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This book is dedicated to the Reader,
with the hope that at least one
verse may say something to you.

That brings a laugh,
a smile, a tear,
A sweet memory
of something dear,
But if it says nothing
at all to you
Please close the book
and belt out a "BOO."

- M. A.

Sincerely,
Mae Harey

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mae H. Arey

Iva Mae Haithcox was born December 21, 1894 in Iredell County, North Carolina, and grew up on her father's farm. She studied business at Mont Amoena Normal School in Mount Pleasant, and upon graduation went to work for R. J. Reynolds Company in Winston-Salem.

In 1919, she married John R. Baker. Two children: William M. (Buddy) Baker, and Janet Elizabeth Baker Clark.

In 1930, she married Caeger Parks Barringer. One child: Robert Davis Barringer. That year she moved to Salisbury.

In 1951, she married John Arey.

Mrs. Arey has been a member of the congregation of Haven Lutheran Church for nearly sixty years, and she continues to take an active interest in church and community affairs.

FOREWORD

Most of these books will be given to family and friends, people who know the author well, but undoubtedly a few will come into the hands of readers not personally acquainted with Mae Arey. For them, this may serve as an introduction.

She is always inspiring us — with her many interests and abilities, her patience and generosity, the strength of her opinions, and her love of life. She is never without something to do or something to talk about, and though she loves company and companionship, she delights in the pleasures of solitude and independence Within the family, she has touched all of our lives, helping and encouraging each child and grandchild along life's road. Among her friends, she is loved.

There are so many remarkable things about my grandmother I could tell you, but they could quickly develop into a book on their own. Instead, if you listen to her through the words on these pages, you will discover her humor and wisdom firsthand.

— Susan Finsterle

EARLY WORKS

To "Victor"

Somehow or other, when I'm with you, I forget I'm not a doggie too;
And I want to tussle, and scratch, and fight;
And then sometimes I want to bite.
But who's to blame — is it me or you —
'Cause I want'a be a doggie too?

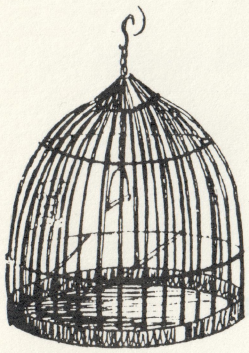
I can't remember that I'm grown up,
And ain't never been a little pup;
But ought to be nice and dignified —
Somehow I ain't just satisfied,
And it makes me feel kinder blue
'Cause I can't be a doggie too.

Can't somebody tell me a plan?
Sure will appreciate it, if you can.
For I've studied, and studied, and studied until
I can't study now, though I've got the will.
And here's what I want'a find out from you —
Just why can't I be a doggie too?

But since I've studied there's a little refrain,
Just keeps a' running and running through my brain.
And here's what it says: in foul or fair weather,
It's nobody's business if we're doggies together!
And we can tussle, and scratch, and fight;
And it's nobody's business if the doggies do bite.

So as long as you're a doggie, I'm a doggie too;
And whose business is it, or what can they do?
'Cause I like doggies and I'd just as soon be
A little doggie as heaps o' folks I see —
So "Victor," if you're willing we'll never grow up,
But always be doggies, what you say, "Victor pup?"

The Bluebirds



It's necessary to our happiness,
That's the bluebird.
I've never been about much,
But that's what I've heard.
I know a girl who owns two
Lovely birds of golden hue.

When she got them I can't say,
But they came by the mail.
Guess they cost a lot of money.
Now they're not for sale.
It makes me feel rather blue,
Since I can't own a bluebird too.

Guess some fellow sent them.
Someday perhaps I'll know.
I suspect for them she kissed him,
But he'd not tell you so.
It's hard to tell just what I'd do
If I might own a bluebird too.

Perhaps I'd kiss him only once,
If mother wasn't 'round,
Or would let him hold my hand
At the risk of mother's frown.
Oh, no telling what I'd do,
If I might own a bluebird too.

I think sometimes I'll be right good,
And never do a wrong.
Then perhaps when I'm not thinking,
Some fellow'll come along,
And if I treat him as I should do,
Then I may own a bluebird too.

"Peg"

O, Peg is the dearest thing
That ever lived I know!
There's mischief from her curly head
Down to her longest toe.

Those hazel eyes can look at you
So innocent and clear;
That little tongue can blab away
On subjects far and near.

While all the time her little brain
Is calmly playing tricks,
Perhaps the pocket of your coat
You'll find chock full of sticks!

And your pencil she will borrow, too,
With such an innocent air
And talk to you in pleasing tones
While she tucks it in her hair.

And, oh, so many little stunts,
She'll tease and dare and do —
I think she's just the dearest kid
In all this world, don't you?

And all the boys she's ever seen,
She's teased and imposed upon
And yet she seems to captivate
And take their hearts by storm.

Farmers, mechanics, railroaders and dudes,
She thinks they're all perfect dears
And the soldiers in khaki and the soldiers in blue,
She has for them smiles and tears.

She's just an angel, you'll say, and it's true
While she's drinking the cheerfulness cup,
But do be careful, old chap, I say
And don't get her "dander" up!

John's Blessing

I hate John Baker worse'n anything —
Than a lizard, a sand-sifter or a toad,
Or a snail, a bug or a billygoat,
Or anything I've every knowed.

I hate him worse'n I do a snake,
A great big ugly old striped one.
I hate him worse'n I do hate to figure
Or anything else I've ever done.

I hate him worse'n I do a liar.
(He's lots o' things besides that, too.)
I hate him worse'n an old "hoot owl"
Or worse'n I do a worn out shoe.

I hate him worse'n I hate a bee —
One of those nasty old stinging kind —
I hate him worse'n I hate a fly
Or anything on earth anybody could find.

I hate him worse'n I hate to work,
Or even worse'n I hate a rat.
I hate 'im, I hate 'im, I hate 'im, I do —
I hate 'im, yes, I hate 'im, the forgetful brat!

I hate any "loon" that can't remember
From Thursday to Tuesday he has a date.
His memory's sure in a "mell of a hess"
And I hate 'im worse'n I thought I could hate.

(Married him two years later.)

Our Church

On the steps of Mont Amoena
In the eve at setting sun,
All the student body gathers
Girls and teachers one by one.

And the loyal Lutheran spirit
Fills the heart of every breast
As we gaze upon our church
Looming in the bright southwest.

Outlined 'gainst the setting sun,
Yet shrouded in the gloom so great,
A holy picture there we see
As on the steps we sit and wait.

Far above the town nearby
Behold the Cross in plain outline —
And this symbol e'er reminds us
Of our Savior's love divine.

In the ages of our fathers
On this Cross for us He bled.
In the future may our lives be
By His holy guidance led.

May a loving sister spirit
Fill the walls of Mont Amoena.
May we seeds of kindness sow
Just remembering who's the gleaner.

To the Coffee Pot

We miss you on the corner there,
We sadly pass the spot;
We gently wipe away a tear
For you, Old Coffee Pot.

Long years we've seen you stand —
Part of our town it seemed —
That you so quickly could depart
We never even dreamed.

A faithful guard, so staunch and brave,
For years and years you stood,
Perhaps we never loved you then
And now we feel we should.

Though always as we passed along,
A glance we cast your way;
We pointed you to strangers out
And much we had to say.

We told the mission you fulfilled,
With tales of war and all,
How a man hid there for days and nights,
And to think now you must fall!

From every heart a call goes up,
Some one must lend a hand;
Will help you to your feet, Old Pot,
And again must see you stand.

Oe'r all Old Salem sounds the call;
We can't repress the sigh;
For you, Old Coffee Pot are gone;
So Salem must be dry.

The heart of every Salemite
Is doubly sad and sore;
For since you've gone, Old Coffee Pot,
Salem is Salem no more.

Note — The Coffee Pot, over seven feet tall, was erected on a pedestal in 1858 in front of a tinsmith's shop as an advertisement. In the late 1950's, it was taken down to make way for highway construction; later it was restored to a location 100 yards south of the original. It has been adopted as a local symbol of hospitality.

FRIENDS & KIN

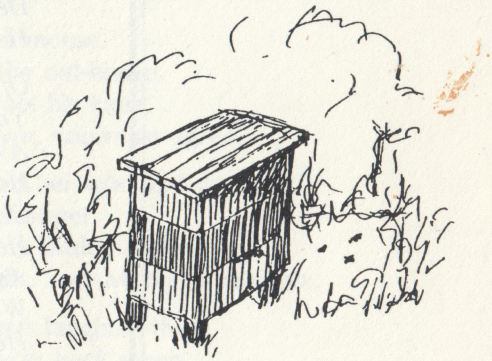
As we grow old, do a little work;
a little playing; some learning,
and a lot of praying.

- M. A.

Seeking

As I look back
To my youth
I find I'm seeking
For the truth!
Why my father
Always said
We must pay
For board and bed.

Though we planted
And we hoed
And we shared
The things that growed,
Never did I hear him say
That we were ever
Worth our pay.



We picked berries,
Got be-chiggered,
I could not know
Just how he figgered
Pay for keep
Always begun
For where to sleep
At twenty-one.

We helped rob bees
And fix the honey
But never seemed to earn some money,
So at home
We could not stay
So we all
Just went away.

As I look back
I now have guessed,
He thought for us
It was the best —
As brood of old
Were often told
Go West, young man, go West.

Mike

My Grandson Mike
Used to ride a bike.
Sometimes on the ground,
And sometimes in the air.
He did it with sound,
And he did it with flair.
Sometimes it was more
Than neighbors could bear.
They got a little sore;
You know what I mean?
But 'long about then
He joined the grown men.
He was all of sixteen.

Of course, he got a car,
You know how they are.
As he closed the door latch,
He'd take off with "scratch,"
One hand in the air.
He hadn't lost his flair.
As he turned from left or right
With a wide swerve,
He screeched around the curve,
And soon was out of sight.

So the neighbors breathed with ease.
They were never hard to please.
And, or course, I breathed a sigh
As I waved to him good-bye.
That phase passed as phases do,
And he has settled a notch or two.

I didn't fret much.
He has a certain touch.
A great depth is there,
With a sense of what's fair
By anybody's measure.
A unique treasure;
Can't put my finger on it.
Few there are that own it.
Not every one can see
What is very plain to me.
That's what I always saw,
But then, I am "Grandma."

Way Back When

There are so many funny things
Backward-looking memory brings,
Like how each day my little sister
Fussed at her tangled shoe-lace twister.

How each morning she would grumble
And to herself just mumble, mumble;
How the morning that my Dad
Decided all of it he'd had.

We were all still as a mouse.
She hadn't been to the out-house.
As he yanked her cross his knee,
He should have known, you must agree.

So while he whomped her whomp-t-do,
She let go right in his shoe!
'Twas then I heard my Daddy's grumble,
And "Served you right," my Mother's mumble.

We had to squelch our laughter then,
But now it's funny, way back when.

My Three Year Old Grandson

I placed him on the pot
To do it or not
If not to take a pill
The thought just made him ill

So there he just sot
Very firmly on the pot
Then he began to rock
Forward, back, smooth as a clock

Results he surely got
And do you know what?
One can learn an awful lot
From a tot
Upon a pot!

Annabelle

Oh, Annabelle
Oh, Annabelle
Where e'er you are
I wish you well.

Sometimes I think
To ask you down
Then must remember
You're not around.
To hear you speak
With cheerful laughter
Will come again
In the hereafter.

So in this life,
To some, not all,
Come silent times
Before the call
And we accept,
As it must be,
The call that comes
For you and me.

To Texas

Two old girls
With less to do
Took to the air,
And away they flew
To a point called Comfort;
A Texas town.
The air was fun
To the older one,
But the other craved
To hit the ground.
She had no pill,
And she was quite ill
when the plane decided
To bump around.

When they got there
The weather was fair.
So after a rest
They both got dressed
Ready to go out,
They hoped, of course,
To look their best,
But the mirror
Made one pout.
Said the younger one,
"This Texas sun
Is by far too bright
By mirror view,
I never knew
I was such an ugly sight".

Said the other one,
"Come on, lets run.
I'll not take a look.
Let's just think
Of having fun
And never get unshook.
That bright sun
Could shame me up.
I have no room to doubt it.
I'll take not time to interrupt;
I'll just not think about it."

My Friend
(Pearl Waggoner)

My dear friend
M[illegible]had been,
But she came back
To class again.
She floated in
Like spring air
With son Ken,
And her wheel chair.

How good it seemed
To have her back;
Though in numbers,
Much we lacked.
It seemed almost
Like it should be —
With teacher, her,
And only me.

We discussed
The lesson text,
And our own times
Just came up next.
Way back then
They had so much,
But with God
They lost their touch.

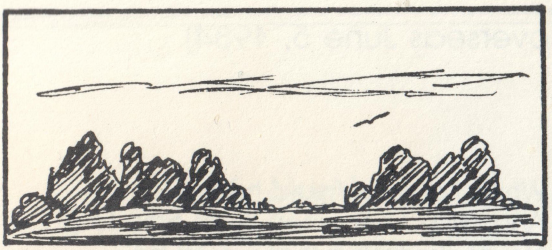
With those -isms
Mixed all in,
They just forgot
Which was sin.
So then we took
At us a look.
We have -isms,
We have lust.
Let us not forget
That we're God's dust.

To Carrie — Her Ninetieth

Welcome to the nineties,
you've come a long way.
Of course, you never thought
you'd make it to this day.
You've traveled ninety years
and some of them were rough —
You made it through life's training school
and you came out tough.
Sure, you've climbed your hills
and known hill-top delight,
And, too, you've know the valleys
and the darknesses of night.
But, as you've traveled onward
highways have leveled some
And you can be so thankful
for the distances you have come.

So welcome to the nineties,
the land of footsteps slow,
A thankful, happy land
where footsteps still may go.
Sweet dreams are memories now,
those joys still linger on,
While the problems that we had
seem faded out and gone.

Welcome to the nineties,
we're glad that you are here!
Have a happy birthday
filled with love and cheer —
And, dear Carrie
each year you tarry
Have a happy year!!



Yesterday

April 2, 1984 *Ollie Hallman*

Thank you, Lord, for yesterday
When my friend was laid away.
The sun was bright, the earth windswept,
As my friend in peace now slept.

Now today the rains come down,
And the thunder makes its sound.
The whole earth is blessed with rain,
And my friend is earth again.

All things even out, I guess,
And God's own he doth bless.
As here my friend could not stay,
Thank you, Lord, for yesterday.

The sun shone bright with cooling breeze,
Dry grass beneath the flowering trees
A beautiful day to say goodbye,
And sleep beneath the cloudless sky.

Dust to dust and earth to earth;
'Tis how we gain our spiritual birth.
Thank you, Lord, she's on her way,
And thank you, Lord, for yesterday.

Jessie

(died overseas June 5, 1984)

When I called, I said hello,
And asked her when 'twas time to go,
Never dreaming that would be
The last time she would talk with me.
Each of us said the things you say
When a friend is going away.
And just a week from that day,
She had joined eternity.

Then we waited her return
In a casket or an urn.
However long the time must be;
Her coming back from over sea.
In homeland which she loved best,
There she found her final rest.
Her onward journey ever blest,
On to her eternity.

note: funeral 6-16-84

To My Neighbors

Neighbors, dear neighbors,
I want you to know
I love you all
As we onward go.
I stay at home,
Have things to do,
But when you're happy
I'm happy for you.

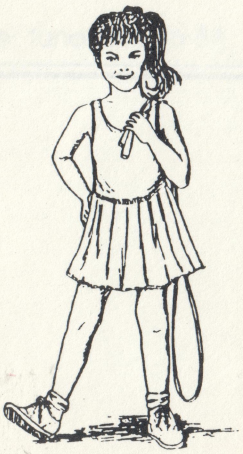
I'm just an old lady
Who doesn't want to be nosey
But I do like to know
You're comfy and cozy;
And when you have sorrow
As sometimes we all do
I pray to Our Father
To hold on to you.

The Little Girl Across the Street

The little girl
Across the street
Walked so straight
And looked so neat.
I just knew
She must be sweet.

Then one day
A neighbor said,
She's not so sweet
But rude instead.
The other day
She came quite close.
I reached out —
Touched her almost.

I smiled at her
And said, you're neat.
She stuck out her tongue,
Kicked up her feet,
Went running back
Across the street.



Well, said I,
'Twas just a mood.
All kids sometimes
Behave quite rude.
I watched her dance
And shake her curls,
Do hop-scotch,
and twists and twirls.

If I waved,
She waved too.
Just a busy little girl
With things to do.
Many a time
She laughed with glee.
But never once
was she rude to me.

Andrea

(my young neighbor)

Andrea was hurt
Lying there in the street
Ready for work
And dressed so neat.

Just as it happened
I was passing by
And when I looked at her
I wanted to cry.

I could not help
So I did not stay
I came into the house
Where I could pray.

"Dear Lord," I said,
"Don't let it be bad,
Let it be good news
So we can all be glad."

And so it was
Later on I heard,
When I called a neighbor
And asked for the word.

When the two cars hit
She was in between
Just an accident
That's never foreseen.

So, dear Lord,
Please make Andrea well
Just as she was
Before she fell

And thank you, Lord,
For your loving care
For both the elderly
And the young and fair.

My Gardening Neighbor

Here comes old John,
Dear John,
He comes down
To gaze upon
Gently touch and walk around
These things he grows
From out the ground.

I can sit
And look out too —
Enjoy how fast
His plantings grew.
It's fun to know
That things can grow.

It's great to be
Where I can see
And never have
To plant and hoe
Because that task
Is not for me.

Old Mae

(As the gardener sees me)

Here comes old Mae,
Dear Mae!
She creeps about,
Or so I've heard,
To try to care
For cat and bird.

She feeds the cats
Out in the back,
Comes to the front
With seeds in sack.
She scats the cats,
The birds she shoos,
When they try
Each to abuse.

Cats catch birds
And birds flip cats —
They both behave
Like feuding brats!
So each to each
Must bring some woes
For that's the way
Their kingdom goes.

I don't know how,
But hope she can
Put them at peace
With her feeding plan,
But as I look out
I have my doubt
If they're as stubborn
As feuding man.

March ninth 1985

Old John, dear John
He went away
On the morn
Of one March day.
And it makes
My eyes grow dim
To know I shall
No more see him
As he gardens
Across the street,
Where he grew
Good things to eat.
I'm glad I told him
I enjoyed the view
Of all his plantings
As they grew.

To My Doctor

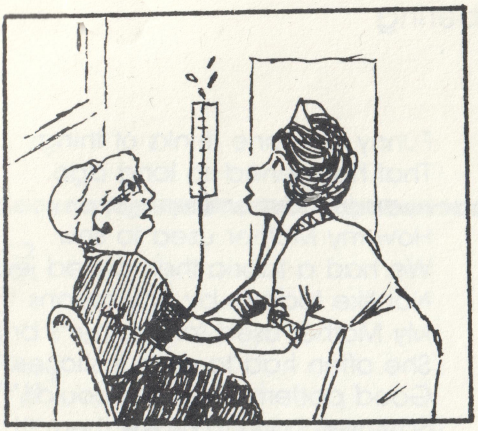
Dear Dr. Murphy
I've got to explain
I'm never going to take
That medicine again
I'll do all I can
To comply with diet
And if it's time to die
I'm not going to fight.

I've lived to be
Nearly ninety in years
And all that time
I've shed few tears
I've taken no medicine
And seldom been sick
If it's time to go
Why should I kick?

I don't mind going
I just mind ailing
And up to now
I've had smooth sailing
My Heavenly Father
Has stood near me
And across big Jordan
He will surely steer me.

I've had a good life
With ups and downs
And He has helped me
Across all mounds
And I know He will guide
When I leave this land
And then very soon
By His side I shall stand.

I have good friends
And a wonderful church
I've always gone there
When in a bum lurch
I couldn't ask more
From this family of mine
They've been really great
All way down the line



So go along with me
And let me just diet;
It has worked before
And now I must try it.
I'm pretty sure
It can give me smooth sailing,
And sure I don't want
To linger here ailing.

So goodbye to medicine —
I'd like to feel good
While I stay here
Just as long as I should
I don't need a thing.
I have it all —
I'll be glad to go
When I get the call.

P.S.
While you searched
To find the right pill
I tried out the diet
But got very ill!
So thanks to you,
And thanks to Dr. Lo,
We seem to have something
That's making a go.

Remembering

Funny how one thinks of things
That happened so long ago.
I was just remembering
How my Mother used to sew.
We had a fabric then called jeans,
Not like today's by any means
My Mother used for brother's britches.
She often had to rip out stiches.
Good patterns then we couldn't get,
So it was hard to make them fit.

The sewing machine was not the best,
And sometimes it would splutter.
'Twas then my Mom would take a rest
And so oft I heard her mutter,
As those jeans were firmly gripped
And those stitches out were ripped,
What must have been a real desire
As she warmed herself before the fire.
"Oh," she'd say in words so quick,
"I could throw you under the fore-stick."

I guess the reason I thought back:
The other day I was sewing,
And my progress seemed to slack,
And the stitching was rough going.
As my machine inclined to balk,
I got up to take a walk.
I shook my head and backed away,
And heard myself distinctly say,
"It just won't work; the seam's too thick.
I could pitch you under the fore-stick."

NATURAL THINGS

This is God's world. While He keeps me here, I plan to live in it and be happy.

- M. A.

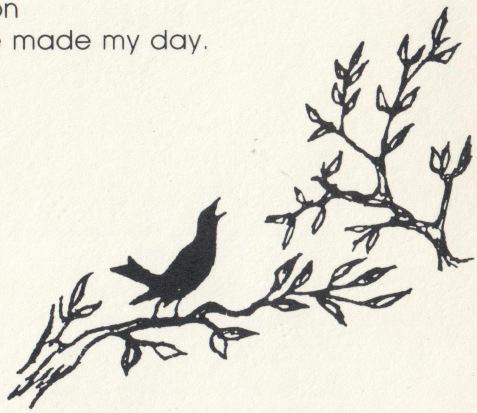
A Rose

How beautiful is a Rose.
Can anyone suppose;
Wrapped in tissue; tied with string
Gently placed in the hand of a friend
How much joy one rose can bring!!!

Little Bird Sing On

Little bird, little bird,
How I wonder
    what you heard
You stretched your neck
    and cocked your head
Just then I heard
    the other bird,
I think you read
    just what he said.

You spread your wing
    and flew away
So now two sing
    but I can't say
If it's a carol
    or an ode
It must all be
  in your bird code
But this I know
    and this I'll say
Just sing on
    you've made my day.



The Blossom Tree

There is a beautiful,
Beautiful tree
Which doesn't really
Belong to me,
But it is planted
Where I can see
Just how beautiful
It can be

And now I sit
Inside my door
And gaze upon it
More and more
As it's blossoms
Come deftly o'er
And through it's foliage
Score by score.

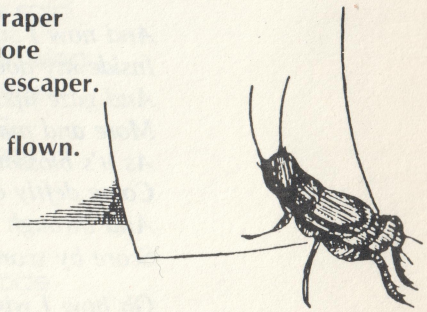
Oh how I wish
That others too
Could reap the joy
That is their due,
But they pass on
Things to pursue.
They think they have
Too much to do.

When they grow old
And sit like me,
I hope they'll have
The time to see
That olden days
Can joyful be,
And just be glad
God made a tree

Cricket in the Sink

Come, come, cricket in my sink,
Don't you know you'll drown?
I don't know just what you think,
But water will surround
And float you off and far away
And you will never drink,
Nor ever see another day.

Come, come, cricket, climb this paper.
I'll put you out the door.
I might hurt you with a scraper
And you could jump no more
Come on, come on, be an escaper.
You can do it all alone
Now, into safety you have flown.



Cricket in the Bedroom

Cricket, cricket,
What are you doing
In my house,
Moving more silently
Than even a mouse?

I watch my step
And where I've slept . . .
I don't want to squish you
But when you want to squeek
I surely would like to hush you.

Now I don't like to beg
But, Mr. Cricket, please,
Just avoid a squeeze —
Go outside
And there abide
To rub-a-dub your leg!

A Sad Chant to Michael's Cat
(Her name was Hawk)

Oh my Hawkie, my Hawkie kitty cat!
She does things when she shouldn't do that.
Then she comes up with these little kitty cats:
One, two, three, four, five, six, seven —
Seems like the dough had too much leaven!
But my Hawkie's a happy kitty cat.
Yes, my Hawkie, my Hawkie, my Hawkie,
My Hawkie is a happy kitty cat.

Take an old hen with seven little chicks,
That's alright, she can live in the sticks.
When they get fat, we can eat the chicks.
But my Hawkie, she lives in town.
Got to feed her good or else she'll frown.
My poor Hawkie, she can't raise chicks!
My poor Hawkie, my Hawkie, my Hawkie,
My poor Hawkie has got to get a fix.

The Sad Conclusion

She went for the fix
But didn't survive.
If she had to have a fix
She didn't want to stay alive.

To Lady Dove

Pretty Lady, Pretty Lady
I buy expensive thistle seed
So I can watch you
as you feed
Upon the thistle sock.

Now they tell me
at the store
They cannot get them anymore.
What can I do
To pamper you
To keep in sight
Your daily flight
As in and out you soar?
I hope you'll feed
On common seed
And keep on coming back.
I'll put them out
scattered about
Upon the grassy ground.
I'm sure you're smart
Will not depart
But still keep coming 'round.

Your shrewd bird sense
With no suspense
Must surely, surely reason
It is indeed
That thistle seed
For now, are out of season.

Mr. Squirrel

Good morning, Mr. Squirrel,
With your tail in a curl.
Hop around and go away.
You'll gnaw into my attic
If you decide to stay.
Now that would make me frantic.
So, Mr. Squirrel, "Good day."

My Tree
(The Poplar)

There was a tree
That looked at me
Outside my windowpane,
And though I knew
It could not see,
It's changing view
Became to be
A part of life's sweet gain.

In winter bare
Wafting in air
Its message sent to me:
It's cold out here
So do beware
And keep your chair
Just inside there
Where you can safely see.

Then in the spring
The birds would sing
Lodged in its budding limb
And very soon
Seek grass and string —
A nesting boon —
New dreams to bring
As dreams of old grow dim.

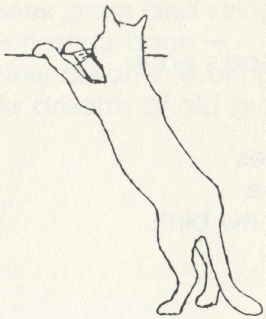
Then summer time,
High in its prime,
Clothed in green so gay,
It housed the birds,
And seemed sublime,
No need for words,
As breezes climb
Content to rock and sway.

Then best of all
There came the fall
With colors rainbow bright
All other views
This one will pall
Then bring the news
Of winter's call
When grounds so oft grow white.

Howe'er it be
It seems to me
How blessed is God's earth.
What joy it gives
To grow a tree
That lives and lives
For those who see
The wonders of new birth.

That Loving Cat

Her name was Taffy,
Lovingly daffy.
She'd purr you a song
A dozen yards long.
For just a little loving
She'd twirl about your feet,
And purr that song so sweet
For just a little loving.
But she would yowl and yowl
And almost howl
When all she got was shoving . . .
When what she craved was loving.



His Name Was Sam

He was a stranger
At my back door.
He was hungry
And his feet were sore.

He was wary,
His gaze askance,
He needed a friend,
I had a chance.

I offered food
On a cardboard tray,
Gently put it down
And walked away.

He backed off,
And quietly stood,
Then came forward
And devoured the food.

He disappeared
But came around
When food each day
On trays he found.

It took him awhile
To learn to be
At ease with a broom
In hand and me.

But by and by
He ceased to roam,
Decided he finally
Had found a home.

He was a great cat
And one of a kind,
Had the biggest face
You'd ever find.

Shoulders broad
And jaws so strong,
He conquered others
As he strolled along.

He was cool,
No pet on a shelf,
He let his world know
He belonged to himself.

I called him Samson.
The name seemed right —
He had self-confidence
And he had might.

Oh, that was quite
Some years ago.
He still is here
But moves more slow.

Now we call him Sammy,
Sometimes just Sam,
But he still can fight
If he's in a jam.

He seems content
To rule the back door
And show all comers
Who keeps the score.

February 9th, 1984

Sam, dear Sam,
He is no more.
That snowy night
At my back door
I didn't know
It was good-bye
Although I'd known
His time was nigh.

'Twas almost dark
When I looked out,
I didn't know
He was about.
He only came
Now and then,
Not every day
As he had been.

I pushed the screen
To take a look;
He held it back
So it couldn't hook.
I put his food
Out on his tray;
He ate it quickly
And went away.

Sam, dear Sam,
You were so strong
And your life
One earth was long
And you lived it
In full time
I'm sure your rest
Is now sublime.

March 1, 1984

Sam, dear Sam,
How could you do it?
You were gone forever
I thought I knew it.
'Twas three weeks
Unto the day
Since the night
You went away.

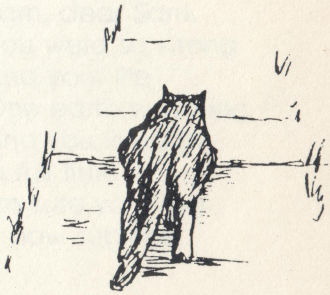
You were so weak,
You could hardly meow.
You've been here
Just three days now —
Predicting you
I guess I'll quit —
I've given up
On your obit.

Sam 1985

On January twelve
I saw Sam, last.
I knew then
He was sinking fast.
He could hardly stand
And he could not eat,
But he seemed determined
To die on his feet.

I offered a box,
Which he didn't accept.
And somehow or other,
Down the walk he crept.
I'm sure he felt
He was going to die.
He must have known
Where he wanted to lie.

He'd had his day,
And now he knew
That it was time
For his adieu.
His sleeping place
He chose alone
Back to dust,
And no headstone.



Mystery Tree

There's a tree
in Lucy's yard
And its hearing
must be hard.
When they tagged it
for dogwood
That little tree
misunderstood.
Now it's young,
still in its prime,
Decides to bloom
just anytime.

Like last year,
midst rush and flurry,
It got caught up
with all the hurry,
And its blossoms
came to stay
And brighten up
her Christmas day —
So she wondered
what it could do
To lift her mood
in springtime too.

Warm breezes blew
for coming spring
And the birds
began to sing.
That listening tree
must have heard
And got the message
from the bird.
Out came its leaves
and blossoms bright
Filled Lucy's heart
with pure delight!

Lo, now it's fall
and you can guess —
There are bright blossoms
in its dress.
What kind of tree
these things can do?
I'll leave the answer
up to you,
But I whisper
'tween you and me,
I shall call it
"Mystery Tree."

The Wee Chickadee

Wee, wee chickadee,
Why don't you
Come close to me?
Way out there
Up in a tree,
You I hear
But cannot see.
Why don't you
Come close to me?

There you are,
Now I see,
You came down
From out your tree
To get your seeds
(To you from me).
You made my day,
You elusive chickadee,
When you came way
Down so close to me.

September 30, 1983

As I look out, I've got to say:
This really is a doleful day.
The clouds are heavy and here to stay.
I can't ask them to go away.

The earth is thirsty,
So are the plants.
I can imagine
Their cheerful chants.

So I shall sit and not complain,
But just rejoice for others' gain,
And hope this lesson will remain:
That doleful days bring blessed rain.

Black Jack
(my neighbor's cat)

Black Jack, Black Jack,
I really miss you, Black Jack.
I think you went away and died,
For you were really sick inside
And when I looked at you, I cried.
Black Jack, Black Jack,
I'm sure now you'll ne'er come back.

Black Jack, Black Jack,
I remember you, Black Jack.
You crossed the street onto my side
With your proper tom-cat stride,
Sat on my stoop with tom-cat pride.
Black Jack, Black Jack,
I can't wish you would come back.

Black Jack, Black Jack,
I can see you still, Black Jack.
I remember you as when
You were strong and not so thin.
Our friendship started way back then.
Black Jack, Black Jack,
Be strong again, but don't come back.
There's got to be a better place
For a big, black cat with a friendly, bold face.

There's snow on the ground
    and it's still coming down,
I'm in the house
    walking round and round.
I had some place to go
But the weatherman said snow —
He didn't think I should;
    I still thought I would.

When the phone began to ring
I knew that the thing
Of our business was put off.
So I sat me down
    Upon a cushion soft
And got the word for sure.
So now just to endure!
Never like to sit and look
But what a joyous day to cook!

God's Nature

There's a skinny tree
Across the street.
I wonder how it grew so tall.
It must be
'Bout twenty feet,
And almost no limbs at all.

There is a bunch
Right up on top.
When breezes blow, it sweeps high.
It has a hunch
It is a mop
To brush the cobwebs from the sky.

But in the snow
It has to bend.
I wonder why it does not break.
It bows so low,
It cannot mend.
I'd like to tie it to a stake.

When it is ice
That bows it's head
So very low it hits the ground.
It's sacrifice
I know it's dead,
But it's just listening to God's sound.

Then summer comes.
I view that tree
Standing straight and very tall
God's nature hums,
And that makes me
Bow way down and feel quite small.

God's Nature Number Two

The little tree across the street
Kept adding inches to its feet
And grew so tall
It had to fall
Beneath the ice and snow and sleet.

In winter time it holds its green
And makes sometimes a dazzling scene
As fallen snow
And icicles glow
And sparkle through its boughs that lean.

Lo! Now it never more shall stand
Or wave its mop nor feel so grand
But stoop so low
It forms a bow
Above the surface of God's land.

Thistle Seed and Finches

Oh, thistle seed,
Oh, thistle seed,
You are just what
The finches need.
You cost so much,
A real big touch
Just to see
The finches feed.

There's not just me
To pay your fee.
My family knows
And their money goes
So I may quite
Contented by
To watch them fight
And feed for free.

So thank you, Lord,
For birds, for finches,
For all outdoors,
For parks and benches,
For family dear,
Some far, some near,
Who make it good
To still be here.

For what? I do not know,
Sometimes old folks
Become a woe —
I hope I don't
Before I go.

Deitrich
(My daughter's miniature dachshund)

Little Deitrich
Had his ways:
He was so long,
He walked in sways.

He liked to walk
And sometimes bark
In back yards
Or in the park.

He was smart —
Could let you know
When he was hungry
Or had to go.

Those bright eyes
I still can see,
How he wagged his tail
And looked at me.

When he went,
It made me sad,
But he was sick
And now I'm glad.

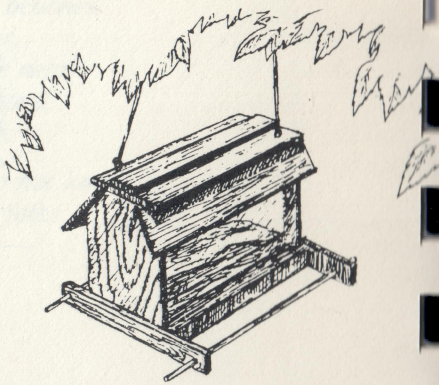
He was real old
But always nice.
I can picture him in
Dog paradise.

Little Creatures

Hello, little birds,
Hello, little birds,
I like you in flocks,
Coveys or herds.
I like it not
When there are none,
I even enjoy
When there's only one.

So fly away
But come again,
Away like the breeze
And in with the wind.
It makes me so happy
To see you when
You keep on coming
Even now and then.

Goodbye, little birds,
Goodbye, little birds,
I still like you in flocks,
Coveys or herds,
So fly away now
But keep on coming,
Singing and humming.
Such lovely features,
God's little creatures.



The Blue Spruce

A tiny Tree
Was given to me
With strands of popcorn
wrapped around
From its top to the ground.
I placed the tree
Where I could see
All the birds
that found it there
And came with glee
to share the fare.

Oh, they came
in flocks and droves
From other trees
slopes and coves.
Yellow, red, black and brown
from sun-up
Until sun went down,
and then one day
the food was gone,
and the blue spruce
Was all alone.

Though it was small,
it still was strong,
So it grew
all winter long,
And by and by
it was quite tall,
and then disaster
Struck that Fall —
A sleepy driver,
With a jerk,
made his car
Go beserk.

It jumped a ditch
into the yard
And struck the tree
so very hard.
Its boughs were bent
onto the ground
And many wounds
on it were found.
I looked at it
and heaved a sigh,
I was so sure
that it would die.

We helped it up
And firmed the land
Roped and braced it
straight to stand,
Smoothed and covered
all its scars
And applied tree-healing tars.
All our efforts were repaid,
The tree was staunch
and unafraid.
Its branches waved forth in the breeze
and it grew strong
Like all the trees.

Now today
I look and see
What a joy
it's grown to be
And I think
of human life,
how we too
can conquer strife
When a helping
hand we grasp
And our Heavenly Father ask
to help us rise
Each time we fall
and walk again
Straight and tall.

The Broom

(My Neighbor Dog)

I pick up the broom
Because, I guess,
It's time to sweep
The felines' mess.

My two cats
Are never neat
When they come
Around to eat.

So I go out
To take a look
At what they left
In their feeding nook.

And do I have
A great surprise!
There's not a crumb
Before my eyes.

At first I pondered,
Where did it go?
But that was before
I met Bruno.

Now I often
Sit and wait,
For cleaning up
I really hate.

Oh, that Bruno!
He can amaze —
That tongue of his
Has sweeping ways!

Bruno #2

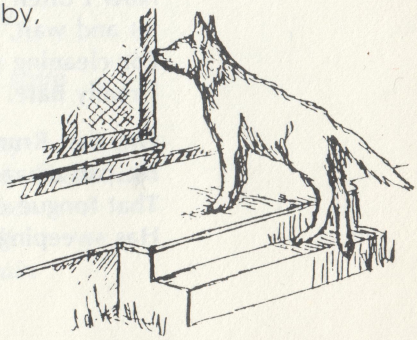
Hello, Bruno,
Well fed, I know.
But to treat you right,
Here's a great big bite
Of good Alpo.

Hello, Bruno,
Cats are fed, you know.
So just take a seat.
What's left, you can eat,
The rules are so.

Hello, Bruno.
You come and go
For lunch or supper,
A good cleaner-upper,
And cost no dough.

Hello, Bruno.
Everytime I'm slow,
You take the dishes
Out on the lawn,
And your tongue just swishes
'Till the food's all gone.

Hello, Bruno.
I think you know
That scraping a plate,
I really hate.
So, maybe that's why,
When you come by,
I think it's great.



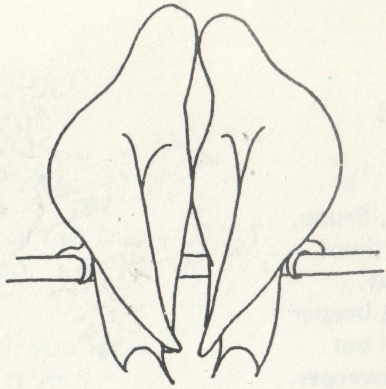
Bruno #3

Oh, Bruno, Bruno,
Where art thou?
I wish I had
A shrieking beeper
To call you out
To be my sweeper.

Bruno, Bruno,
Where art thou?
Don't you know
I need you now?

Both my sloppy
Pussy-cats
Left big messes
On their mats.
I don't have time
For those and thats,
Cleaning after pussy-cats.

Oh, Bruno, Bruno,
Where art thou?
Don't you know
I need you now?



The Doves

Oh, you beautiful dove
And your lovely mate,
Whom I know you love
But act just like you hate.

I put out some seed,
Plenty there for two —
Please come on and feed,
Don't fight like you do.

You flip, you flop, and fly away;
Neither one is beaten
But neither can stay . . .
So your food is eaten
By greedy Mr. Jay!

Then comes a squirrel or two
And truly you are out,
So what's there left to do
But just go home and pout?

Please don't pick a bone,
But learn that you should rather
Not try to eat alone
When you can dine together.

Gloria

1985 storm

Gloria was coming
With power potential
To destroy both city
And residential.

Forecasters warned
And the people fled;
Nobody wanted
To be found dead.

As refugees
On higher ground,
They needed help,
The people found.

So they went down
Upon their knees
And prayed to the Hand
That quieted seas.

Then Gloria became
Much more mild,
E'en like a hurricane's
Modest child.

So what, said broadcasters,
Do forecasters know?
Why did they preach
Such terrible woe?

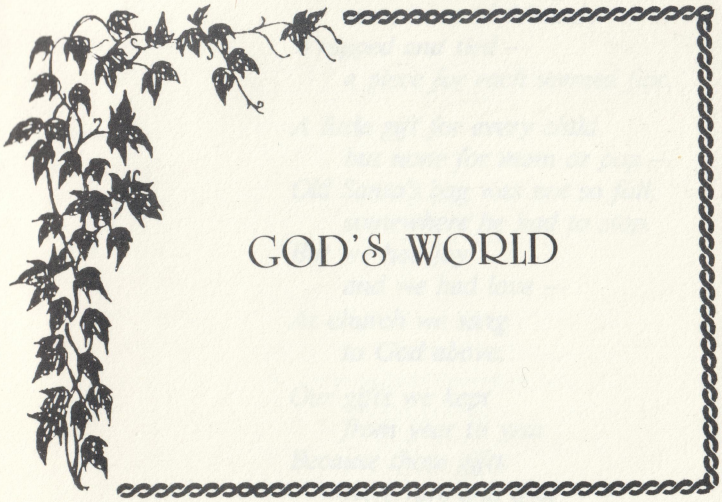
Next time you warn
The people won't flee,
So see what damage
False prophets can be?

Be warned, Oh Man,
Be warned and see:
No power on earth
Like God's can be.

His right hand
Gloria's power was staying
Because He heard
His people praying.

Spring

The mocking bird
On the dogwood tree
Flips her wings
And laughs at me,
As the breezes blow
And the grasses grow,
The blossoms burst,
After winter's worst,
Some small birds fight
In the sun so bright.
There's joy in the breeze
And the sky is clear,
New leaves on the trees —
Now, spring is here!



Friends come: friends go: Family is for life. God is forever.

- M. A.

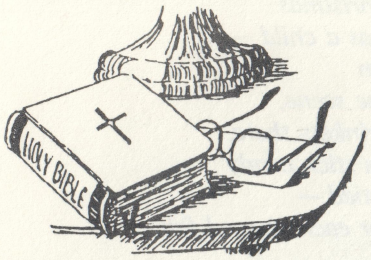
I remember Christmas
when I was a child —
A tree so green
was on the scene,
No lights or trinkets there,
sometimes stick candy
Wrapped and tied —
a piece for each seemed fair.

A little gift for every child
but none for mom or pop —
Old Santa's bag was not so full,
somewhere he had to stop.
But we had joy
and we had love —
At church we sang
to God above.

Our gifts we kept
from year to year
Because those gifts
were rare and dear.
Sometimes I think
that even now
We have so much,
big treasures clutch,
But miss that joy somehow.

Now I know
days come and go —
Christmas comes each year
and brings to all,
Who rise or fall,
the gift to hold most dear.
His son, The Christ,
God sacrificed —
Was born upon our earth.
As we applause
For Santa Claus
dare we forget His birth?

(written for 1985 Heavenly Herald)



Blessings and Forgiveness

My heavenly Father
Has bountifully blessed me.
I can feel a great calm
In the midst of a sea
Of raging upheavals
As sometimes there must be.

'Twas not always so —
I can remember when
I suffered to bursting,
Very deep within,
Sometimes for others
Sometimes my own sin.

Little things I had done
And things I didn't do;
Sometimes evil thoughts
I had to pursue;
Just a lot of even-ing
To measure up to.

Thanks to my heavenly Father
I've done a lot of living —
Nothing great it's true,
But ne'er a bit of sniv'ing.
Oh, I've loved the life He gave to me
And all His great forgiving.

I'll Take Creatures

Once I had thought
To write about people
Then the preacher preached
'Neath the church's steeple.

I sat there thinking
How my husband must burn;
The words hit him.
At turn after turn

But when we got home
The first thing that he said,
"That sermon hit you
Smack on top of the head."

I decided right then
To use most of my words
For what I could see
In dogs, cats, and birds.

For then I knew
One has to be blind
Not to see only God
Can read humankind.

At Church

I strongly believe
In going to church,
Keeps me away
From the devil's lurch,

So I go,
Try not to miss.
There I don't hear
The serpent's hiss.

The music soothes,
And words inspire,
Lift way above
Hell's burning fire.

All people there,
Sisters and brothers,
In Christ's love
Reaching out to others.

If everyone went
How far we could reach,
From America's shore
Round Africa's beach.

We could wrap
The world again and again:
Christ's love made known
Could forgive all sin.

But on this earth
We must suppose
That's not the way
The whole world goes.

So we know,
And understand,
How e'er it be —
We're in God's hand.

Meditation

I do not soar beyond the sky
for that's as far as I can see.
I do not sink to depths of Hell
for there I hope to never be.
I like the earth beneath my feet,
I like soft clouds above,
I like the flowers' aroma sweet,
and people here to love.

I've known great joy while biding here —
I've known deep sorrows too.
I've done some things God planned for me
and some I shouldn't do.
I know all things are in His hand
and all will even up
For wayward joy and evil thought,
we drink the bitter cup.

For what we sow we surely reap
He tells us in His word.
At reaping time we say our prayers
and know that He has heard.
From our shoulder then has gone
that heavy, heavy load
And we can travel humbly on
that promised homeward road.

I guess this earth is all I need
as God gave it to me —
His land, His trees, and sunshine bright
on broadness of His sea.
I can dream of happy lands
so far beyond the sky
And I can wait to soar to them
When God calls me to die.

HODGEPODGE

A Farmer's Daughter

I grew up on a farm
Where the world had charm
And not a lot of people.
Where it was the rule
To go to Sunday School,
Hear the bell in the steeple.

The wild doves coo-ed
And owls who-who-ed
With little creatures creeping.
Stars were very bright,
Not far out of sight,
And nights were good for sleeping.

So in country or in town,
I don't like the crowds around,
And feel a little out of fix.
But give me just a few,
Or only me and you,
And I'm at home back in the sticks.

However this is God's great world,
And I can stand the swirl
When it seems to be my due.
Right now all is very neat;
I'm the last house on the street,
And His whole world is my view.

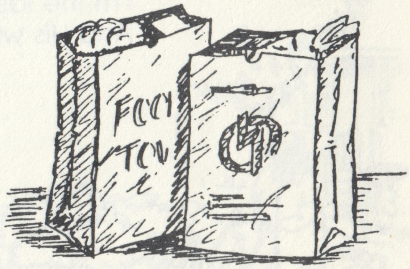
Do Today

Oh, I am so glad to say
I got my groceries yesterday.
I got off a little late
But it was my usual date.

Once I thought I would delay
but, I remembered "Do today;
Don't put off until tomorrow."
No regret I wished to borrow.

So I hustled out the door.
In due time I reached the store.
Got what-so-ever things I needed
And today I'm glad I heeded.

Down the rains came pitter-patter.
I could sleep. It didn't matter.
No outside chores to run.
Yesterday's were yester-done.



Tired

There's a thing or two
I ought to do,
But I'm a little tired.
And it's not required.
So I shall sit
And rest a bit.
Some "Time" I'll lose,
May take a snooze.
So what! I'm a little old.
Besides I'm told,
Rome wasn't built in a day.
I'll just rest; do things my way.

To Dust

Well today
I've got to do it.
If I delay
I'll surely rue it.

I'll get a rag
And shake it out,
Put back the bag
And go about.

This task I hate —
I've never hid it,
But it won't wait
And no one did it.

Company came
And company went
But dust's the same
On plane and vent.

I wonder why
Although they saw,
They didn't try
Dusting for Maw?

My name is Mother,
Maw or Mom,
They see each other
Go and come.

When they don't dust
(Sometimes they do)
Then true, I must
And this I knew.

So let them come
And go or stay,
We'll just pretend
Dust blows away.

My home lights up
With fun and chatter
And, lounge or sup,
Dust doesn't matter.

Dear Guardian above,
Please keep it so,
That the family I love
Can come have fun
And, dust or not, then go.

P.S. Now that I'm through versifying,
I realize that time is flying —
Many things are now a must
So I'll have no time to dust.

Just Wished

Sometimes I've wished
I were a housekeeper
That kept the dust swished
And ran the carpet sweeper,
Made quite certain
I'd squished the aerosol,
Straightened each curtain —
And repeat, repeat,
To keep things neat
And watch over it all!

Oh, instead
I can sit in clutter,
Just make my bed,
Eat toast with butter,
Feed cats in back,
And birds out fore . .
And nothing lack.
Oh, happy me,
To truly see
I need no more!

Untold Pots O'Gold

I've heard say there's a pot o'gold
at rainbows end,
But I've found one
at each road bend
As the sun sinks low
with its golden glow,
And the leaves, growing old,
are brown, red or gold.

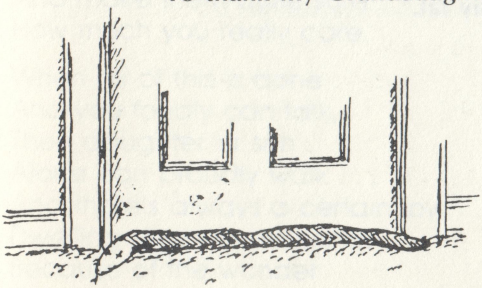
I've seen one
in a wee babe's smile,
Down life's highway
mile after mile —
I've seen one
in the golden hair
Of a daughter
growing each year more fair.

I've found one
in graduate school
Where young faces glow
with knowledge they know,
With anticipation
of where they'll go
Out into the world
that doesn't move slow.
Will there by joy?
Will there be woe?
Only God in Heaven
can really know.

Oh, I've found so many
Pots O'Gold!
Their number, I'm sure,
could never be told.
I've hidden them all
in my treasure chest,
My golden memories
that I love best.
I find them there
as I grow old
And count my blessings
as they unfold.

The Door Guard

My Granddaughter
Sent me a serpent.
His usefulness I interpret
Is to guard my door.
So I let him in
To break the wind
That comes through
Down at the floor.
He lies there
With his deadly stare,
And the wind comes through no more.
He used to be plump,
Round as a stump.
But now he's a little thin.
I've used him so often;
Each time he would soften,
But still he can stop the wind.
Sometimes I forget
I've put him down there;
'Tis then that I let
In the cold air.
He's in a squeeze,
So I drop to my knees,
And rescue my pet,
Put him back on his job,
And lock the door-knob
To make him and me
As safe as can be.
And I'll never falter
To thank my Granddaughter.



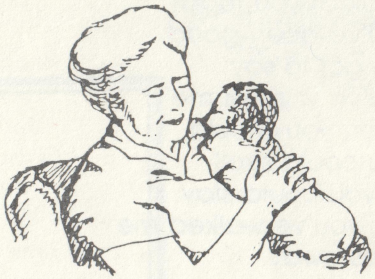
The Door Guard #2

After many years
the serpent went flat
And a kind friend
gave me a cat.
As I knelt
to fill the space
Of the serpent
I had to replace,
The cat looked at me
and mischieveously grinned
As if to say,
"This is your lucky day
For now I'm here
to keep out the wind."

The cat is very young
and I'm ninety-three
So I expect him
to outlast me
And guard the door
when the stormy winds roar
And keep the room warm
as it needs to be
As he always did
just for him and me.
So, "Thank you, Mr. Cat,
and please do
Try to stay fat."

Growing Up

I'm not sentimental
About kids;
They're just little humans
To me —
Interesting little humans
I like to observe
And see
Just how interesting
They really can be



Tiny human beings
Can make a hit
Just by the way
They can fling a fit —
Kick their feet in the air
Make a fist of each hand
And yell just as loudly
As a little human can.

When they reach six,
Dancing eyes
And full of tricks,
Some play alone
Some love to mix . . .
Just keep close touch
And know what ticks.

Soon come the teens,
Time to loosen family strings —
There's life and all it means
With so many puzzling things —
Time to listen, time to hear
And make them quite sure
How much you really care.

When all of this is done
And you fondly can talk,
Then daughter or son
Alone can proudly walk . . .
And there's always a certain joy
Dwelling deep down within
Because of the wonder
Growing up has surely been.

Old Legs

(December 21, 1983)

Dear old legs,
I look at you today,
You've been good,
I've got to say.
You've walked me
When you should,
You could stroll
Or you could stay.
Oh, you've walked me
Miles away.

When I arise,
You're on duty,
Never ask for
Pay or booty.
I hurry
And you run,
Just keep on
Till day is done.
Heavy work
Or having fun,
You and I
Are always one.

Now, as today
I look at you,
I'm so glad
That we could do
All the things
That we have done,
And I'll say
That we have won
Most the things
That we've begun.
I thank God
You still can gait
For on this day
You're eighty-eight!

The Prayer

Thank you, Lord,
For legs that gait
Even though
They may be slower
And sometimes
We have to wait
For someone else
To hold the door.
Thank you, Lord,
So very much,
Even when
We use a crutch.
No greater Blessing
Do I know
Than dear old legs
That still can go.

I Walk

I decided to walk near ninety one
I had to walk, I could not run
But I did increase my walking pace
Then I fell twice upon my face
'Twas then I knew I had to slow
For like the young I could not go.

So now I walk but take my time
Because I know I'm past my prime
I inhale the air and see the trees
Greet the dogs that like to please
And force myself to slow my pace
When back towards home I'd like to race.

One Opinion

A man is a man
As long as he can;
A woman's time
Is all she seizes —
She can be a woman
As long as she pleases!

A Second Opinion

A man is a man
Because of what's in his heart,
No matter when he stops
Or where he got his start;
A woman's a woman
Be she quiet or fussy —
She ceases to be a woman
When she becomes a hussy!

A Silent Sin

I looked at a man
A long time ago
And what I felt
Was a sin, I know
I wished him dead
And down below
The only place
He was fit to go

I even chose
A spot on his head
Where I might strike
And hurry him dead
Then I stopped
And thought instead
Only God
Should make his bed

I've wondered why
I felt so strong
The man had never
Done me wrong
Time long since
Has struck his gong
He hurt someone
I had loved so long.

My Swear

I had a professor
In biology class
Who said many wise things.
One, I've never let pass.

When you get angry,
You don't have to swear.
It's not the words,
My prof did declare.

It's the way you say it
That lets off steam.
It just doesn't matter
What words you scream.

So when I get angry
And want to swear,
I pucker my face
And pull my hair.

I stamp my feet,
Yell "peanuts and popcorn,"
And feel just exactly
As if I had sworn!

The Camel My Daughter Gave Me

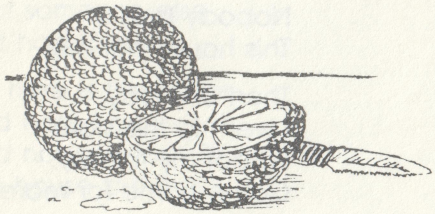
That Camel is what I call an "everyday gift."
Something I see each day and get a lift.
That Camel is stuffed, of course,
Soft fluffly skin, not slick like a horse.
Big soft eyes, a motherly look.
Just like a real camel in a story book.

She has adopted my Teddy Bear.
Each day these two have a love affair.
She looks down at him as he snuggles close.
He looks up at her; just nose to nose.

I gaze at them from the foot of my bed,
And get that lift, just like I said.
They keep me company, that funny pair;
My fuzzy Camel and my Teddy Bear.

Grapefruits

I don't know why
Grapefruits I buy.
They can be
Lots of trouble.
They shoot me
In the eye
Even when their
Juice is dry.
And when they're wet
They don't forget
To overflow and bubble.



"Chicken"

Used to when I heard "chicken,"
It meant a piece of meat.
But the word now seems to quicken:
"I dare you to retreat!"

Know Thyself

So many things
I'd never have known
If I hadn't decided
To live alone.

I remember how
My family I rapped
If ever I found
Dental tubes uncapped!

Although today
It's not my style,
It does happen
Every once in a while.

I stand in shock,
How can this be?
Nobody lives in
This house but me!

Then one day
I went to the store,
Forgot my money,
Came home for more.

Pooh! I said,
I've got to rush
But somebody sure
Forgot to flush.

Just wait 'till I tell 'em
What else they did —
They even forgot
To close the lid!

It was a rule
To make each bed —
I just couldn't stand 'em
Tousled instead.

So the day
I walked into my room
Saw mine tousled
I got the broom!

I whopped the lump
But nothing moved.
So, I forgot
Had now been proved.

Oh, things turn up
Every day or two
That someone else
Just had to do . . .

But here is the house,
And here I be,
And nobody lives in
This house but me.

Visit, Pittsburgh, PA., 1982

There were clouds
And there was rain
Like dark shrouds
O'er dirty lane.
There were homes,
Mostly dark,
With eaves and domes
So tall and stark.

On the grounds
Were trees and grass,
Street traffic sounds
As cars would pass.
Hedges green,
Thick as big pillows —
A rolling scene
Like oceans' billows.

This area is old,
Heavy is the air,
One could almost fold
The smog everywhere . . .
But life is here
Midst joy or woe,
To God, it's dear
Howe'er it go.

Inspiration

When the Muse haunts me
I compose —
Everything else
Either waits or goes.

A thought seems to come
Only one time
And the words seem to flow
In a musical rhyme.

It may be day
Or may be night,
Either in the dark
Or broad daylight,

And I seem to give
As I receive
Some beautiful thoughts
Of things I believe,

Sometimes so spiritual,
As it should be,
For my Heavenly Father
Has been good to me.

If I travelled uphill
Or tumbled down,
My Heavenly Father
Was always around.

When my soul cried out,
Though making no sound,
I always knew
Peace could be found.

'Twas not earthly
As first I thought,
But truly Heavenly,
And free, not bought.

Elva,

Love and Happy Birthday

Ruby 1989